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—Article Number:.....42396

Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Vermont's Agencies on Aging expect spike in Medicare
2 counseling due to Medicare Advantage cancellations

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4 TEXT BODY:

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5 Many Vermonters with Medicare Advantage Plans
6 received cancellation notices effective at the end of 2025.
7 Affected beneficiaries should carefully review and save their
8 cancellation letter, which provides information on how and when
9 to timely enroll in a new plan.
10 Vermont's five Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) —
11 including Senior Solutions, which serves Windham and

Windham and Franklin counties, among others — administer the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (“SHIP”), SHIP offerings free, unbiased, and confidential health insurance counseling, including assistance with Medicare Plan changes, for individuals, their families, and caregivers during annual open enrollment.

The annual Medicare open enrollment period runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. This is the time for Medicare beneficiaries to review and make changes to their coverage. With the reduction in available Medicare Advantage plans, Area Agencies on Aging expect a significant increase in the number of Vermont Medicare beneficiaries seeking SHIP open enrollment appointments to make plan changes.

SHIP programs are funded and regulated under the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Each year, SHIP programs assist more than 6,000 Vermonters in choosing the most cost-effective Medicare Plan to meet healthcare needs.

AAA SHIP counselors say they will schedule as many open enrollment appointments as possible, while serving the most vulnerable beneficiaries with complex plan changes, and those eligible for low-income programs. They are also increasing the number of SHIP volunteers and interns to provide general information and assistance to callers.

AAAs may refer beneficiaries directly to [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227) for enrollment assistance. 1-800-Medicare is staffed 24/7 and can assist with your enrollment needs.

Vermont’s population is the third oldest state in the nation, with 155,000 Medicare beneficiaries.

“Vermonters are feeling the impact of fewer Medicare insurance plans coupled with an increasing need for many other services for older and disabled Vermonters,” Statewide SHIP Director Sam Carleton said in a news release.

Carleton added that “federal funding for SHIP programs has been reduced or remained flat year over year while the

47 nation's aging demographic has grown, with 11,000 baby
48 boomers turning 65 every day. SHIP counselors are working hard
49 to schedule as many Medicare beneficiaries with individual
50 appointments as possible under these circumstances."

51 For more Medicare information, visit Senior Solutions'
52 website at seniorsolutionsvt.org, or call their HelpLine at 866-
53 673-8376 or 802-885-2669.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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